

# Brown Recluse

Summer 2003





# Brown Recluse Spider Bite

- There are ten different species, six of which are confirmed to be poisonous. The spiders are tan to brown and most species exhibit a violin-shaped marking on the dorsum of their cephalothoraxes (the head).



# Where you can find them

They tend to live in dark dry spaces such as attics, closets and wood piles, and generally they are not aggressive but rather bite when forced to.

As of 1984, at least 5 deaths had been reported from their bites in the USA. Their hemolytic venom is dangerous.



# The Bite!

- The bite generally causes some mild stinging or burning and ulcerative necrosis may follow within several hours to several weeks. The initial lesion may be red, edematous or blanched and may later may develop a blue-gray halo around the puncture.







# After the Bite

- The toxins in the bite kill the cells surrounding the puncture, producing a black gangrenous spot.

Day 5  
after  
bite



# Day 6 after Bite





# Day 9 after Bite



- Often, the skin proceeds to peel away from the area around the wound, exposing the underlying tissues.



# Day 13 after Bite



- In extreme cases, an area 6 inches across can be severely affected and, since the wounds are slow to heal, they leave a very



# 2 years after Bite!

- Full recovery may take several months and scarring may remain. Plastic surgery and skin grafts are sometimes required.



# What to do?

- **MEDICAL TREATMENT**

Antivenin is not widely available. Treatment may include ice, anti-inflammatory drugs,,and antibiotics. Occasionally, plastic surgery may be required.

- **PREVENTION**

Keep buildings and especially storage areas (closets, basements, attics, etc.) clean and orderly. Learn to recognize the Brown Recluse spider by its distinctive features so that an infestation can be recognized and removed by cleanup and/or insecticides.